Enhancement of Air Service to Gulf Countries from Kerala

4566. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Kerala passengers from Gulf countries to Kochi, Trivandrum and Kozhikode are suffereing due to the non-availability of enough flights and not allowing the foreign airways to fly on this route;

(b) if so, the steps taken to meet the demand on this sector; and

(c) whether the Air India will introduce more flights to this sector?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) and (b) In order to provide better connectivity to international passengers from Kerala, the Government have recently declared the new Cochin Airport at Nedumbassery as an international Airport. Foreign airlines can now seek access to this airport subject to formal exchange of air traffic rights. Apart from this, the air traffic rights of some of the Gulf carriers operating services to Trivandrum have also been enhanced recently.

(c) Due to constraints of aircraft capacity, Air India have no immediate plans to introduce more international flights from Kerala.

Expansion of air Services in Himachal Pradesh

†4567. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cities in Himachal Pradesh from where air services are being operated constantly;

(b) the month-wise number of passengers who are benefited by these air services;

(c) the details of the remaining cities to be connected with the air services during the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(d) whether it is a fact that the foreign tourists, who want to avail air services in Himachal Pradesh, cannot avail the same due to the

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.